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people kept their distance, and among them some pithy proverbs were spoken to bear upon the shortcomings of the white man. One or two of them turned to repeat to the dead what had been said, and there was great laughter. Sedefo came to assure us that the dead man liked it very much. For the dead, it appeared, were especially susceptible to humor and to exceptional occasions.

About us, or edging their way toward us, were the younger men in their ceremonial dress, the toga-like cloth covering their bodies, but leaving one shoulder bared for respect, and the women in their knee-length *pangi*, or cloths, hanging from the waist, and their shining brass rings reaching from wrist to elbow and from ankle halfway up to the knee. Among the dancers, but standing somewhat aloof, could be seen a man or woman with seed rattles about the ankles. These were the fine dancers. Of them our informant had spoken when he said, "They dance well at Gankwe."

Carved stools were placed for us facing the coffin a little to the left of the singers, where we could best see the dancing. One or two lanterns were moved to give us better light. The drummers, who had not left their places, took up the rhythm again—one of the women had us know that the spirit of the dead man had communicated to the spirits of the drummers that he wanted to see the dancing resumed. The singing began—a woman's falsetto voice and a chorus; the hand clapping of the singers and bystanders emphasized the basic rhythm. It was slow at first, then quickened, and the dancing became more animated.

"They dance *sekeli*," whispered our friends. "Later they will dance *awasa*."

The dancing was confined to a comparatively small space. It began with a barely perceptible motion of the feet of the dancers to the rhythm of the drums and the hand clapping. Then the feet began to execute figures in place, without leaving the ground, the arms hanging loosely at the side. This was continued for some time, until, arms flexed and held rigid at the elbow, and knees bent but rigid, too, the

[illegible]

intricate steps began. The movement of the feet, angular and precise, was reiterated by the outstretched palms, while all the muscles of the hips took up the rhythm. Now one of the men with the seed rattles at his feet danced facing a woman who also had these rattles, and the dance became theirs with a chorus of dancers moving more and more to the side, keeping the rhythm with the feet. The drums beat faster, the hand clapping became louder. Those two balanced their bodies as they bent their knees lower and lower, all the while executing the figures with feet, arms, and hips, and how unaware they seemed of the audience! And even of each other, for what awareness there was to quicken the pulse of the dancing was more than one man's awareness of one woman. It might have been a dance to Asase—the great Earth Mother—but it was, in fact, dancing for the dead, for the two would turn again and again to face the coffin, as the others had done, except during the intervals when they recalled the white man and woman in back, and turned to dance to us and our flashlights.

Seketi, awasa. . . . The dances changed, and the songs, and the drum rhythms changed, too. The children at our feet had fallen asleep and lay doubled over, their heads resting upon their toes. More men joined the dancers. It was long past midnight. The women who had infants on their backs moved away silently in the direction of their huts, but when an elderly woman tried to go, too, she was reprimanded and sat down again.

There was another leader for the singing, and another. A man's falsetto was heard in a long recitative that preceded the dancing to the massed voices of the chorus. He faced now the dead, now us, as he improvised. Once more it was gay.

The dancing became more and more spirited, but when a dancer had continued in the circle for some time, an older woman coming forward from among the bystanders would put her arm about her and exclaim the singsong, "*Adoa!* . . . *Adoa!* . . . *Adoa!*" Others came forward to con-

Herskovits & Herskovits B-4 (1928-1929) 1934
Bush Negroes
Surinam

gratulate the dancer, while another had taken her place in the dance, only to be brought to herself again when her dancing had become so abandoned that there was danger of falling or tripping. For it is always a bad thing for one's *akra*—soul—to fall from exhaustion or even to trip while dancing, and it would have been especially dangerous to have fallen with the spirit of the dead so close.

As time passed, figures were seen edging away into the darkness. The knot of dancers thinned. Now there were but two young women dancing. They wore identical cloths of a new material, a pattern resembling the cloth over the coffin. They were related to the dead man. When all were wearied, they had to go on dancing. . . . Dawn would not be long in coming.

3

We knew that it would not be long before the spirit of the dead would be called upon to tell his family, fellow villagers, and clansmen how death had come upon him. For, in the Guiana bush, except for the very old, there is little natural dying. The deceased has been killed either by the gods whom he has offended or by the black magic of a powerful enemy, and it is of this which he must tell before his burial. When Sedefo came to our camp the next afternoon, we asked him about the "carrying of the corpse," as the ceremony is called. We told him that his people in Africa—for the Bush Negroes know that their origins are African—also asked the spirit of the dead why death had come upon him, and we plied him with questions. What would they do to be sure the answer was right? Who would ask the questions? When would they establish the facts of the killing? And might we come and see?

There would be no trouble, he told us amiably enough. The spirits of the dead liked attention, and for the *Bakra*—the white man—to come so often to his brother's bier was a compliment. We could return with him, but we must make haste—and it was evident that important ceremonies were about to take place.

implied), and he repeated the word over and over, until this led us to talk about singing, and at last we had them consent to dance suss for us. It had to be done very quietly, in the slight clearing in back of the shelter. Suss is an African dance. It is danced by men only, in pairs, and is something of a game. The one who wins "kills" his opponent. The earth spirits are said especially to like it, and it is danced in the fields or in the villages for them.

There they stood, Yamati and Sabape, facing each other, their enlarged navels almost touching. One agreed to be "in," and one "out," and as they began, their jaws came forward in a pattered, pugnacious way, and their arms moved to reproduce in pantomime shield and spear, while the feet crossed and recrossed.

Kevi-kevi g'a S'ie
Zond'o linga
Linga-li

The monkeys
Go to dance race
Without rings.

Huk, huk, huk!

They sang the song over and over again, panting at the end of each verse to dramatize combat.

"I killed him," said Yamati. He had won, and they began again. If the one who had agreed to be "in" had his foot on the outside as they clashed, then he lost—he was killed.

4

As they were dancing, we noticed a young man we had never seen before. He was standing watching the youngsters at their play, smiling as though he enjoyed their contest. He was very dark, even for a Bush Negro, short and stocky, with unusual muscular development of arm and chest and thigh. His age, one would judge, was nineteen or twenty. He turned his smile on us when he realized we were noticing him.

M. Herskovits & Herskovits E-8 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

if it was smaller still it would plague the members of the family with sickness, or bad luck, or it might make them poor and send all kinds of trouble to them. 776

"Kunu," he went on, "attacks the family of the offender, but almost never the person who has done the evil thing himself. That would be too easy. If I wanted very much to do something I should not do, then I might be willing to take death in the end. But to punish my whole family until it is ended—that is too much."

"But what is kunu?" we asked.

"Kunu is a spirit. We dance to it and serve it with offerings. It is not the same in every village, but in our village we dance kunu in this way. If we dance it during the next moon, then we dance one day only, and two months later we dance kunu again. Then we wait eleven months and dance again. We do this every year in the same way." 776 782 796

"Is this enough to keep kunu away? Would it not be better to dance more often?"

"It would do no good at all to dance kunu more often. The spirits would only be angry if they were disturbed all the time. If you have kunu, you have it," we heard again.

But why, we asked, were not people careful? Why, if they knew that kunu was hard, did they not walk more softly still, so that they might avoid this trouble?

"Ma, kye! There are always things happening, people always do things they shouldn't."

"Then life is hard for you Saramacca people," we said. "You must always think of kunu."

Our seriousness amused him. It was, after all, this way with kunu. When you had it, you did what you could. If a wrong was done, then it had to be paid for. But the Bakra should not think that the Saramacca people weren't happy. There were good spirits, too. While some spirits punish, others protect. 776

"Have you seen our women dance, Bakra? A Saramacca woman's foot can do things, mati. Have you seen them dance bandamba? Have you seen them *chaka*—shake?" he said, laughing, and turning to the men about him, he added, "We will show them how our women dance—and our men!" 535

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SRS Bush Negroes SRS
Saramacca

Among the people of one group, the principal ceremony may be held in the clearing itself. The drums are brought, and men and women and children pray for fertility. The beautifully carved apinti drum sounds the invocation to the Great God and to the ancestors, while the tall agida drums are brought to call the earth spirits. Two by two the men dance susa, the dance which in pantomime reproduces an ancient warrior's combat with spear and shield, the winner taking on a new combatant, until the final winner is given a wand as a reward, and gains for himself the title of "G'aman of Susa" until the next dance is held. Other dances follow. Perhaps the women now line up in two long rows facing each other, and dance bandamba, the dance which celebrates marriage and the birth of twins, and the birth of a child who is born feet foremost. The motions are the slow rhythmic manipulations of the muscles of hips and abdomen. It is a dance of fertility, danced by the very young girls as well as by those who have borne children. But the women who are past the age for dancing sit with their men, arms interlaced, swaying to the rhythms of the songs they sing. . . . There are offerings to the earth spirits, poured upon the earth out of black obia pots and calabashes, while other offerings are set upon the ground for the ancestors.

In another settlement, the ritual would be chiefly carried on in the village itself, and there might be a local dance of fertility, danced nowhere else on the river. "An old, old ancestress taught it to us," the villagers would say.

When it is time to plant, the woman plants with the man's help.

"When I plant a new field," said the younger woman, "I pray as I work."

And this is her prayer:

O Sky God, Mother of the Earth, Ancestors,
I am planting a field,
Make it bear;
People who come to me must eat,

Herskovits & Herskovits R-5 (1932-1933) 1934
Bush Negroes
Surinam

gods do not come to them." There was in her voice contempt for women who had no gods. She was of a reddish-brown color, taller and more slender than most, and the great coils of brass about her arms and ankles told that her beauty had had full recognition. These had come to her at marriage, as had the small earrings of gold which the bassia had brought to her from French Guiana. With these, too, had come cloths and handkerchiefs, beads and carvings.

If white women had no gods, did they know any of the other things which women must know? Did the white woman wear an apron underneath all her cloths, as women should? Were her thighs cicatrized? Did she cook for her husband, or other men, when she should be isolated in the special house provided for women's monthly visits? Did she purify herself with sacred clay when she emerged from isolation in order not to spoil her husband's obias, for which contact with a woman who has her menses is the deadliest taboo? Why, having borne children, did her figure not show it?

"Have you drums?" the bassia's wife asked. "Without drums, how do you pray? How do you dance?"

Dancing without drums availed nothing.

"White women have no gods. The gods do not come to them. They are not troubled by the need to dance. White women do not pray," she concluded, seeing that what dancing the white woman did could only be a feeble affair.

"I will send my son to your country. The men who go to the French shore say it is good to know how to count the white man's way. My woman-child I will never send," she finished with finality.

Now it was the white woman's turn to ask a few questions, having done explaining how her boots laced, and why it was that she was dressed very much as her husband was dressed.

The white clay in the hair and on the face of a small child was medicine. The child's mother had washed for her god that morning. He was a god whose day for dancing was Wednesday, and now, feeling the god stir in her, she would

"Tonight there will be dancing for you," Anfu said, when we left the shrine. "I will go and pray again before the dance, and then I will go to my hammock early, for I leave at sunrise. We will meet again at the G'aman's."

The bassia's wife followed us to our house.

"You are a woman, yet you went inside the shrine. Maybe you do have gods, white woman. When you go in again will you pray to the Earth Mother for the woman Kupa, who is my sister? Twice she bore girl children, and both sleep. Now she is with child again. She wears many obias about her neck, and daily she washes with white clay. She is the woman with the wooden obia doll hanging between her breasts. No, not the one who has the small black sack about her neck. Any woman who is with child wears that. You will know her when you see her. She is beautiful."

7

The dance was held in the bassia's quarter, in front of one of his houses. The bassia was a man of wealth. He had three wives, while the chief had but two. Whether one of the three was only nominally his wife and had come to him at the death of a brother, we were unable to learn, but that his means were large was apparent. The house where his personal possessions were stored was built high on posts. A house so raised stood out from those about it and bore the same name as the moon. Underneath it, in the shelter made by the posts, lay a partly made drum, some carved wooden implements, and carpenter's tools. There was also a forked stick in the ground upon which rested a black obia pot with water and weeds in it.

The children began the dancing.

Ayo, ayo
Ayo, ayei,
Agida comes,
Ayo, ayo,
Earth spirits come,
Ayo, ayei.

A girl of ten or eleven led the chorus. She had a string about her waist, and the strip of cloth that was tied about her neck as a ceremonial garment hung down cape fashion. About her navel and on her face the cicatrised patterns had been completed. Her voice was the shrill voice of a child, and the answering chorus was as shrill.

"Chaka, chaka!" called the bassia who was directing the dance. He was demanding those movements which bring into play the muscles of the hips.

The women waited. They had come in all their finery, their tunics of the newest cloth, their coils of brass bracelets and anklets made to gleam by rubbing with sand, their skins dark and glistening with the oil rubbed into them for the ceremonial occasion. Those whose hair was worn in braids had redressed it that day. About their necks were beads. Their cloths were fastened tightly about them, so that their figures showed plainly.

The men, also in their best, waited with them. The iron Kromanti obias on their upper arms fitted tightly, and showed the great muscles above and below them. Those who wore beads had two or three strands of yellow and red intertwined, the small beads worn by men, small almost as okra seeds. One or two wore love obias—cowrie shells sewed on a band of white cotton, and then dipped into water which was thickened with white clay. One or two wore a small black bell-shaped obia—half the size of their thumbs—on a black string, and with swagger had swung it about so that it hung at the back. There were obias below the knee, and obias which were great brass rings for the big toe of the right foot. But one or two of the old men, and the young man who was in training for an obia man, wore a jaguar tooth on a string of native twining.

Drums . . . drums. Would there be drums?

The word was whispered from one to the other, and passed like a wave over the waiting figures.

But there would be no drums. This was the day when two gods might come. The god of the ant hill, for which men and women might dance, and the buzzard god of the men's Kromanti society.

Herskovits & Herskovits 1-6 (1929-1929) 1934
[illegible] Bush Negroes [illegible]
Surinam

●535 nten's Kromanti society. The elders had decided these dances were too violent to show to the white man who was with them for the night. Whatever of the esoteric the white man was to see was for the Granman himself to decide. To introduce the drums for the secular dances, and the half-sacred awasa, would be dangerous, for once the drums were there, and the spirit seized one of the players, he would begin to call the gods. When the gods came the dancing would take place until the spirits were satisfied.

"There will be no drums," said the bassia aloud. "There is no one to play them."

No drums!

Again the whispering began. The eagerness, the energy which had seemed to float in the darkness from one to another of the waiting figures began to be dissipated. The men and women still waited, but they were listless.

[533] [534] The little girl sang,

"The bogiwa drum
Sounds Tond."

And the chorus sang,

"Give us Tond."

The bassia who was master of ceremonies noticed the loss of interest with displeasure. It had not been the intention of the elders, when they had made this decision, to have it interfere with the reception of the strangers. He had counted on having spirited secular dancing.

"Friend," he said to the young obia man, "get the dancing started."

He turned again and again to the young man who was being disciplined in the way of the gods, exhorting him to beat time faster, to sing louder. And to the women he shouted, "Shake, women, shake—*chaka!*"

The dancing grew lively.

[23] The white man had learned the words of the refrain, and was singing with them. Master Nigger! here was a white man who could sing their songs. The white woman had

been shown by the bassia's wife how to clap her hands to the rhythm of the song, and now she could not stop for an instant, though her hands ached.

"*Baru mau*—Clap your hands!" the bassia's wife called to her, the instant her visitor's zeal slackened. She herself was dancing in place, her infant on her back, sound asleep.

"*Chaka*—Shake!" she too began to shout, and once she was so carried away by her hand clapping that she joined the dancers, and danced facing the obia man.

Tall and slender as she was, she crouched opposite the man, her child on her back, and executed the most amazing steps. It was as though every muscle in her body had been set in motion by some invisible dynamo.

An old woman interrupted them. She stepped into the circle, and put her arm about the bassia's wife. "Adoo!" she crooned, and brought her to her feet. Another woman had done the same for the obia man.

Now one of the men who wore both a love obia and a brass ring on his great toe began a song. The melody was only a variant of the one Bayo had sung and the sekrti songs we had heard at Gankwe and elsewhere. But here the recitative of the leader was longer. What he sang was not unlike one of our own ballads. He recounted the experiences of a young Saramacca man on the Marowyne River. He had met a Djuka woman, who had taken up with him for his money, and in the end she had exposed him to her people.

Another man sang of a war that white men had with each other. Hard times came to the Saramacca people. There was no work. Then their Granman sent a message to the white elders. The Granman told them people should live in peace together.

The bassia had no need now to spur on the dancers. The small open space was a heaving mass. Nothing seemed immobile. The stars darted, the lights of the small oil lamps held by the bystanders flickered, the very posts which held the thatch of the houses in place and ended some feet

above the roof, like great horns, appeared to sway now to one side, now to the other.

The hand clapping grew louder and faster, and faster still. The rhythm changed. Now the dancers were in pairs, feet interlocking and raised from the ground, while they danced each on one foot. It was one form of the *dowya* dance. This was what was danced to the ancestors before the opening of sacred dances.

The bassia stirred uneasily and soon sought out the young obia man who was standing by. They whispered together for a few moments, and then the bassia spoke aloud.

"It is late, friends. Day will soon be coming. Let us end the dancing. Let us go to our houses."

He turned and whispered to his wife, who came forward with a smoking oil lamp in her hand. Like a knife she thrust herself straight between the pairs of interlocked figures, and began singing a slow moving song.

It is late,
Soon night will meet day,
Let us go to our hammocks,
Let us go to our homes,
Let the gods go to their homes.

In and out she went, separating the rows of figures, and her beautiful voice cast a spell over the dancers. With feet flexed, they stood poised to go on with their dance, yet did not move. The hand clapping stopped, and the singing. There was but the voice of the bassia's wife, who cut her way through the massed body of dancers, her sleeping child on her back, her oil lamp held before her, as she walked, arm outstretched. The dancers gave way before the flame in the small lamp, but still they stood there, their faces disturbed. It was as though food had been brought to whet their appetites and was as quickly snatched away.

At last a dancer reached for a lamp which was held by an old woman, and then another woman reached for hers.

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[illegible]
[illegible]

A NIGHT AT B'EI

" . . . *It is late,*
Sébe night will meet day . . . "

they chanted, as others joined them. Dancing to the slow rhythm of the singers, lamps in hand, all took up the song, until the bassia's wife led the way down the path. In a few moments the flicker of the oil lamps radiated in many directions, and the quieted dancers followed by their families went home singing.

[illegible] 1934
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more than a year before her father's death and therefore had not saved her mother from mourning.

"My sons are big so," she showed, pointing to the mortar, "and already my brother takes them with him down the river, and when they are with him he tells them about the creeks and the trees, and where the villages are which are friendly to our people. But when they come here to see me, then they play. They have play guns and play arrows which they make themselves. Into the uncleared bush they shoot them until I call them away to eat. Here I have no man from whom they can learn. Here they only play."

But boys liked to be with men. When the rains came, her brother would let them sit by when he carved, and, seeing him work, they would take up a knife and begin whittling. That was how boys learned to do men's work.

Women children played with "gosi." She put down her pestle, and felt about in her cloth where the child slept, and brought out a gourd, resembling in size a small cucumber. It had beads on top for eyes and a few deft cuts to indicate nose and mouth, while above the eyes was crosshatching for the hair. Until girls were old enough to be of use in the fields, they sat about in the clearing playing with these dolls.

"When they are four and five, then they like to work."

There was, of course, dancing. All dances were opened by the children, and at six and seven the girls knew seketi and awasa, and bandamba, and the boys danced susa.

"Do you dance susa?" we asked the Granman's five-year-old grandson, who was standing with us beside the widow.

"Ai," he said, but once our attention was turned to him he said also, "White man, the children say you carry money in this." He touched a water canteen which hung from the stranger's belt. "I know it is water."

He knew also that shaving cream was soap, and not white people's sacred clay, and now as women came with bottles for the white man's obia water—a name they gave

"The next time you come to the Saramacca country, you must have twins here," the women said, laughing, "then you will see what a play we give for them. And for a child born after twins, and for a child who is born feet foremost."

The last, however, was not good, and they were really not in earnest, they explained, in wishing that type of childbirth upon the stranger.

"Such a child has a bad spirit. The mother almost always dies when giving birth."

"Is there no obia to save her?"

"The gods can save the mother if they wish. . . ."

There were special songs for twins which were sung when bandamba was danced. Several of the women, and Dida among them, began to sing them. The songs praised the generative powers of the man and woman who had "made" twins. As the women began their songs, they rose from their work and danced, for just as they could not remember the words of a song apart from its melody, so they could not sing the melody without the accompanying dance movements which went with it. Words and melody and movements of the body were all part of the image evoked by the word "bandamba." With arms firmly planted on their hips, and feet slightly apart for balancing, the slow rhythmic play of abdomen, hips, and buttocks went on and on.

But as they sang and danced, the Granman's younger wife suddenly remembered that their voices must carry to the council house, and abruptly the women stopped, covering their faces.

"We're ashamed," Dida explained.

"But the men see you dance bandamba when you give your plays for twins, and the child after twins, and for marriages?"

"Yes, but then it's singing and dancing at a play."

When an occasion called for these songs and dances, it was quite another matter, she implied.

"It is not good to do this for sport."

"It hurts, doesn't it?"

"*Mo kyé!* It is beautiful. The men like it too much," said the girls in a chorus, laughing at the suggestion that the pain of the cuts would deter them from having them made.

Sometimes, of course, the older girl admitted, the wounds did become ugly. There was the girl from Godo, whose suitor had kept bringing her more gifts because she was growing handsomer and handsomer. She was all but ready for marrying, when one of her thighs became infected after the cuts. The wounds were so ugly that she could not even wear the tunics of the grown girl. The family was sacrificing to all the spirits of the earth, begging them to heal the wounds.

7

These days there were many visitors in the Granman's village. There was the girl the Granman had summoned to dance for his guests. She had, perhaps, that very summer got her cloths, and her reputation as the best dancer on the river had won for her a suitor who gave her many armlets and anklets. Her voice was fresh and flutelike in quality, and so fine that when she sang she placed a folded cloth over her mouth, or danced with her head low. This was the way of modesty before people, and humility before the gods.

The women said, "Her spirits dance well," when they watched her.

There was the large girl from a village down river who came almost daily. She had the body of a woman, yet she went about unclothed, and sometimes she appeared only with a string about her waist.

"She is ready for *pangi*—cloths—*ai*," the women said, "but her people do not want to give them to her yet."

They would not explain, however, why the attire of a grown woman was denied her. We could only conjecture about it. Perhaps she had no suitor. The man to whom she had been promised might have died. There might be other reasons.

Bayo laughed. "All this isn't easy, white man. A line about this curve shows this to be a man-child. These are things bush people alone know."

The decorated rim of this tray had interested many who had seen the piece the winter before, and we had had pointed out to us what we ourselves had remarked, that the design was not continuous all around, but that it was divided into four parts, the crosshatched portion alternating with that of checkered squares. Did those have meaning? we asked Bayo.

"Ai, these belong to the women and the children. The small lines are the hair of the children, and the squares here that of the women." The brass-headed nails he touched one by one on the photograph. "The women have nice kamemba," he said, at last.

On the upper river we had acquired another tray with similar motifs, but more elaborately decorated, with carvings on the outer surface as well as the inner, and also with many more brass-headed nails. This use of nails, which was more general in the deep interior, had at first seemed an anomaly, for they must come from the white man's city, since the Bush Negro, we knew, had lost the African technique of iron working. But as we saw more deeply into their customs, we recognized that these nails studding the carvings represented a survival of the African art tradition, and it was, therefore, reasonable that in the deep interior they should be found more profusely on the carvings.

Human representations outlined with the realism of African masks we almost never met, and the exceptional instances suggested only resemblances. The mask itself, as far as we could learn, was not used in their dances. The men knew what masks were, but whether this knowledge came as part of their African tradition, or whether it was brought from the city and the French shore, we could not determine. The African style of depicting the human form had, however, not been entirely lost by their slave ancestors. In this village of Ma'lobbi, where lived one of the finest carvers on the river, the carving over a doorway held us

So it was with each god, until the boy was ready to be initiated into the Kromanti Society.

"There are many, many kruta, white man, for a boy has much to learn."

When those who directed the kruta were satisfied that the boy had learned how to serve the gods he had been given, that he knew their powers, and those things which were hateful to them and would incur their displeasure, then a dance was held for him so that he might demonstrate before the assembled festive villagers that he was ready for manhood.

"We give a big play for a boy who gets his gods for the first time. When the gods come to him at this dance at the bidding of the drum, and he dances hard, then his family is pleased. When a boy dances, then we know what is in him. We know whether his gods are strong, whether he is to be feared."

Once the father had transferred his gods to his son, he did not dance much himself. He might continue to play the drum at sacred dances, but dancing and drumming were for the younger men. His son's worship of the gods through the dance released the father for the study of obia. With the governing elders, the father took up his title as a clan member who sought the will of the ancestors when new tasks were to be undertaken.

"What happens if the father has few gods to give his son?" we asked.

"Then his mother's eldest brother gives his to the boy."

"What if the boy's uncle has none to give?"

That happened so seldom that he could not remember such an instance, but he had heard it said that this had occurred once or twice.

"A man must have gods to help him live. If his family can give him none, then they buy gods for him. Sometimes there are gods in the family that are not too strong, and they want the boy to have strong gods. They go to a man who knows about such things and who himself has strong gods and buy a god for the boy from him."

2: Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

faces. The drummers stop to tune to the desired pitch, driving in the pegs with the back edge of a bush-knife. Then they resume, rattling out a sharply insistent tempo. Women begin to sway. Some of them start a plaintive jungle song. The drums never stop.

A woman disengages herself from the crowd and enters the open space. She bends forward from the waist at a right angle. Her arms form a circle beyond her head, saffron palms outward. She sways from the hips, her torso contorted with sinuous suggestion. Then her feet on the bare earth rap out the tempo that the brown fingers of the men are drumming on the dried skin. The others begin patting juba.

It is a false start. The woman interrupts her dance to criticize the orchestra for not playing in her mood. The crowd is not yet possessed.

Dodo, the woman *basseia*, or boss, goes about urging the women to begin. Meanwhile the bakkra slips through the crowd pouring out drinks of high wine to add to the dark hilarity of the occasion. Always before drinking they will spit on the ground a libation to the gods. A mother gives the rum to her seven-year-old child, who does not flinch from the burning potion.

A new tempo. Three little girls, slim in their nudity, enter the central space. The oldest is about eleven. They stand with their backs to us and begin the *bandamba* dance. The evening is on.

Standing still in the firelight, hands behind their heads, they arch their loins and raise their buttocks up and down.

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Shadows roll on the brown skin and quiver with the firelight. 796

It is a vivid picture, these naked girls standing still in the 535
flickering light of the fire, making their muscles dance to the
monotony of the drums. Sweat breaks out on the foreheads
of the drummers and runs down their faces, dropping off
their chins unnoticed. The music grows louder and louder. 796
Apuku is coming. The stalwart black with the uka-uka 535
holds it at arm's length, braces his feet apart, and delivers his 153
whole body to the rhythm. The little girls, loath to stop,
are seized by their proud mothers who rush out to embrace
them, cheek to cheek. Others press forward with compli-
ments for the excited girls. There is no stopping of the drums
now. Louder and faster the metre becomes, a veritable pan-
demonium. No conversation or restrained observation is pos-
sible, due to the noise; the psychological effect is to wipe
out the inhibitions of daily life and induce a state of semi-
hysterical exhilaration. The white man, forgetting civiliza-
tion for a time, feels like stamping his feet and shaking
himself. And over all is the insistent monotony of the
drums.

A woman has attached dried rattling nuts to her ankles, [334]
and enters the clearing to be swayed by the drums. She too
bends her body at a right angle, palms outward, caressing in-
visible curves in time with the beat of the drums. Her torso
writhes, in time to the beat of the drums. She would be cry-
ing aloud, were it not for the pulsation of the drums. Two
other women come out and accompany her, then another,
then more, until finally eight or nine are dancing in the

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79b 535 158 centre clearing, no longer caring, no longer entirely conscious, their bodies driven by the rhythm of the drums.

No man has yet danced. Now a young buck of nineteen jumps into the centre and begins the *awasa* dance. His movements simulate the flying of a hawk, arms out like wings, pirouetting gracefully. His bare feet stamp the earth, hard enough, it seems, to break his bones. Another man joins him, waving his arms at full length, like an eagle in flight. They chant in talkee-talkee an *awasa* song:

"Foowa mo lukn bon nanga olga."

[537] It means: The fowl must be careful of the hawk; in other words, the girls must be careful of the men. They circle from the waist like birds soaring into the blue.

79b 532 Now a man begins dancing toward a woman. She retreats. No dancer has yet touched another, or even noticed another. But this one is making definite love advances to the woman. He mimics coitus. Coyly she evades his approaches, and will have none of his movements. They are not serious. When she definitely refuses his copulatory advances, the drums stop. He takes a drum from one of the men, puts it under his arm, and follows her, dancing around the clearing, beating out a message of love. They weave a pattern of movement, in and out, in this dance of courtship to the lone muttering tambour.

[302] There is a halt. The drummers rap out a message to other canoes coming up the river, telling them to hurry. Soon more strangers arrive for the final round.

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Then comes the *awaire* dance, accompanied by songs of the rebellion. Ancient heroes live again. Once more raids are made on outlying plantations. The spirit of defiance that Stedman found at Boucou is still kept alive. Then come softer songs—songs of love. "*Te e dormi e songa me, granda-dyo*," a girl sings plaintively. She is telling her lover, "When you sleep, dream of me, many thanks." "*Te kai me u srai nowoo, heeaa na bona srai e ta leyma*"—"When you lead me to deceit I will not follow; such things you should not teach me."

Again the dancers find fault with the orchestra, protesting loudly. They are not satisfied with the rhythm. Abruptly the chief dancer seizes a drum and rolls out a call to Apuku, god of the forest, asking Apuku to come.

Dimly through the darkness they can feel some response. Apuku is coming. Everyone runs back a few steps and utters a slight scream. The spirit of the bush god is entering their bodies. He is welcomed with a little dance, jerkily done, in which all participate. Then comes the special Apuku dance, where writhing, circling, snaking arms simulate the twisted lianas of the jungle, which is the god's home.

Once the spirit of the bush god has entered them, they cannot stop. The drums increase their volume and tempo, until the rhythm is too rapid and intricate for white ears to follow. Now truly they are hypnotized by the feverish monotony, the shuffling beat of fingers on the drum-heads. Because of this trance, fatigue is forgotten. The little *kabowla* keeps steady time, throbbing like a heart-beat. Flat hands

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79½ shade out strange metres on the *sanda*. There is a break; the
● 525 orchestra stops, and the interval is filled in with the heavy
77½ booming of the *apenti*. Often the drummers seize a bush-
158 knife and batter at the pegs, stretching the dried skin to the
[326] proper tone. Mist from the river has dampened their hair, unnoticed. The dance will continue until morning; they must play until the spirit of Apuku has gone.

79½ Everything is set for the climax. Some are still watching
525 while the others dance. Since the old men are too dignified,
158 their places are taken by younger men from sixteen to twenty-five. There are more women dancing than men, anyhow. The white man is wondering how it is going to end. Despite the excitement there has been no orgiastic episode.

Grand finale. There is a tremendous screech from out of the blackness beyond. Three practically naked blacks come rushing up from the river, their faces and bodies daubed
[327] hideously with pemba dister, the ceremonial white clay. One has stripes around his arms, belly, and legs, his face all white. Another's face is bisected with white and yellow pigment. The third is Adjobo, the medicine man; he has circles of clay on his forehead, cheeks, and chin, and rings around his neck. The presence of the ceremonial clay indicates the presence of a god. There is no doubt but that the hideousness of these men inspires a feeling of awe.

They burst into the circle of dancers and scatter them. Everyone retreats before them, with actual or pretended fright. The children become hysterical and cling frantically to their mothers for protection. Women in the crowd are cry-

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ing. The vibrating tomtoms are pouring out a great volume of tangled sound. The three religious dancers whirl like furies. One dances with a wicked-looking machete; he makes it whistle through the air and brings it down with all his might into the ground between two drummers. They do not budge. A second dancer dashes into the bahkra's hut with his whirling bush-knife, hacking at everything in sight. The others seize him and overpower him, not before he has damaged many things with his vicious chops.

This ominous fury characterizes the hysterical possession of the *Cromanti* dance, the wild, mad dance of the evil spirit of the *con con dree*. The crowd keep clear of the chopping knives of the possessed men. They mutter unknown incantations in *odo*, making wild turns and gyrations. One falls on his knees to eat of the earth. Another bites the door of a hut like a dog. The third frees himself from a group of the struggling men who seek to restrain him, jumps into the rapids, swims against the great rush of water with feverish strength, and finally would drown were it not that his family rescues him with a canoe. There is nothing mystical about the extreme muscular endurance of such states; it can be produced experimentally in the laboratory.

The remaining obeiah dancers have a sham battle, fencing skilfully and dangerously with their bush-knives. First they stalk an imaginary enemy with poised machetes. Their muscular torsos held in strained attention would delight a sculptor. Picture a black, arms thrown out and head thrown back, eyes closed in frenzy, tense and foaming lips laying bare his

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clenched teeth, stamping the earth like an animal. Then two such blacks, with glazed eyes, slashing at each other with yard-long knives. This is the obeiah dance. Nothing can stop it until the dancers are exhausted and drop from sheer fatigue. Then the spirit of the god has fled.

Until that time, protesting is useless. It is useless for the pahkra to protest that he wants to go to sleep: "*Me wanny go seepy.*" No attention is paid to that. It is dawn before the dancers finally stop. The visitors go down to the river to get in their corials. We light the dim path for them with a flashlight. They are grateful, and compose a little song of thanks. Even after the corials draw away from the bank, excited women get up in the boats and continue to dance, palms outward, hips high. It is no wonder that the marines in Haiti must confiscate the drums to keep the Negroes quiet. So long as the primitive holds to his intoxicating tom-toms, which manufacture courage automatically, he will never be a coward.

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the age of about thirty-five. Another motive for separation is a husband's inadequacy as a hunter, fisher, and provider. Or the woman may simply be bored with him and like some other man better. The husband is liable to be teased a bit by his friends, but after a few days he forgets and marries again.

Open licentiousness or sexual suggestiveness is never seen in public. The personal modesty of the Djukas has already been noted. Exposure of themselves, or public intercourse, such as is common in some tribes in Africa, never occurs. After the dances, for instance, no open promiscuousness occurred. There is one orgiastic dance known as the *ogalusa*, which means "mating like loose hogs."

Two aphrodisiacs are used liberally by the natives. One is prepared by infusing the bark of a bush vine called *debbil dour* with water or weak alcohol. The liquid when drunk is supposed to give an erection of several hours' duration. Some of it was brought back by the expedition and tried on laboratory animals, with no effect. It is well known, however, that witch doctors will substitute other roots or herbs when giving their medicines to white men.

Another aphrodisiac that we found used among the Aucaners is the seed of the mucca-mucca plant, which grows on the banks of most of the rivers of the colonies. The seed is mashed into fragments and then inserted into the urethra. This acts as a tremendous irritant and is supposed to bring about erections of long duration. If used frequently, a persistent and disagreeable type of urethritis is produced.

At the hospital near the mines of the Surinam Bauxite

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728 communicate to one another their opinions, in what way they
695 wish to see the points of difference resolved. If they are agreed concerning these, then they return to the chief in the shed and the discussion of the matter takes place anew, until finally agreement exists. During this consultation of the elders or council
[562] members a solemn seriousness prevails among them. Women are sometimes admitted to these conferences, but never have a voice, and come merely to listen and to see.

After the matter has been settled to the satisfaction of all parties, the cup once more makes several rounds among those present, and thereafter everyone goes silently and quietly to his camp or dwelling.

Chapter XVIII

Music, Musical Instruments

533 Their music is very simple and monotonous; one makes use of it, to the accompaniment of song and dance, at festivals and cult ceremonies.

534 The instruments are variously used and doubtless according to the type of event. Thus the so-called long drum, called agida (2), is played at cult ceremonies; on other occasions one

2. Papáá drum.

uses the small or apientie drum. Furthermore they have an instrument called kwakwa stool by them, a stool or board of very hard wood on which one beats with two sticks.

534 When they dance the papáá-wenti, an African idol dance,
535 they use the agida drum. For the songé, or ordinary dance, they play the small drum or apienti.

They dance the soessa to the beat of the small drum and with the kwakwa stool; in executing the last-named dance a great deal of competition prevails among the dancers, and the one who

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534 holds out the longest and is the fastest and most accurate performer
●535 of the specific steps for this is cheered as the winner.

Banja or baljaar is one of the true African dances. This name is also given to the African guitar, a musical instrument formerly generally known in the colony, but now totally vanished. This dance is performed to the beat of the two drums and the
[224] kwakwa stool. For this dance the women provide themselves with a saka-saka, a toy having the shape of a great rattle and made from a calabash filled with corals or pits of the Canna indica and Canna lutea, also called viengoe by them. They turn and shake this saka-saka according to the beat of the song taken up by them, which produces a peculiarly strange sound.

Chapter XIX

Clothing, Ornaments, Tattooing

291 Their clothing is very simple. The women ordinarily wear merely a piece of colored linen or cotton strip, called bont, two ells long and one and a quarter ells wide. They wrap this around their middle and allow it to hang down below the knee joints, calling it pangi. This undergarment of the Negro women is thus named
301] after pano (Spanish) and pagne (French). As a rule they have the upper body bare, while around the neck, the wrists, and the ankles
302 they wear strings of coral, which greatly take their fancy. They usually plait the head hair into a large number of small braids and bind the ends of these with white cotton threads. Some of them wear their hair combed out, as a result of which their heads,
301 seen from a distance, resemble large mop-heads. They are very fond of blood corals, which are greatly valued among them for ornamentation.

[292] When they celebrate a festival, they also wear a large number of colored cloths of cotton or muslin around the neck, and further adorn themselves with copper and iron rings around the wrists, among which there are strings of coral in the same manner

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764 The dead person's spouse, his nearest relatives, and his children come and hang their hammocks inside the krɛyɔsu, where they will live until broko dɛ (eighth day after the death).

[533] [535] The village people begin the tukka songs and dance, which will last part of the night, while the friends and near relatives of the dead man lament seated, head covered with a cloth.

[824] The first day after the death, as soon as it is morning, the kisimã arrive, and begin to make the coffin, using mahogany boards always kept on hand, thanks to the head of the village.

[613] The women of the dead man's lineage prepare a meal which is offered to the kisimã about 1:00 P.M. at the end of their work.

While the coffin is being made, the dead man's friends and distant relatives arrive in crowds from the neighboring villages, bringing tafia and cloth as offerings. Two kisimã lay these pieces of cloth one by one on the body saying, "So-and-so buries you."

[767] These pieces of cloth are divided up; about 15 are put into the coffin by the kisimã, part of the rest serve as pay for the kisimã, part as pay for the ɔlɔmã; another part, finally, is used for dressing the widower and his co-wives (or the widow), showing thus that during the whole mourning period they live dependent on the dead person.

Then the kisimã close the coffin without any other rites taking place. The late arrivers who bring more cloths knock the coffin saying, "I bury you," and put them down on the ground.

[692] The work of the kisimã is over; they bring the body outside the krɛyɔsu, in front of which has assembled the council called lãnti kuutu, which constitutes the judicial apparatus of the Boni.

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her from time to time in order to help the god to manifest itself. The crowd presses around the women dancers who execute the greatest variety of figures. At times they embrace each other two by two in the Boni manner. The onlookers jump for joy.

The scene lasts about half an hour, then, at the signal given by one of them, the possessed ones scatter and begin to run through the village: this is the moment for the gods to pay the musicians. Each person rushes to hide his belongings, for the gods will steal anything in the village without anyone being able to prevent them: this is their way of paying.

Soon the possessed women come back, putting down at the feet of the musicians a heap of incongruous objects: /170/ calabashes, cloth, paddles, etc., which their owners come to recover by means of bottles of beer and eggs. Then the women who were truly possessed come back to their normal state and all go home.

This dance was not a success; those present think that it is because the women bearers had drunk tafia, which the Papa gadu detest.

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Inheritance. The dead woman is asked to whom she bequeaths her clearings. She answers: "To her family," this being understood because the bearers move parallel to the people present without designating anybody. Under these conditions the property must be distributed (Kotoïda having no children) among her classificatory nephews. Actually, the plantations still farmable will go to Samabun, her sister's daughter.

[591]

Inheritance of the house does not come up, for the dead woman lived in her husband Empalé's house.

The boat is left to Samabun.

Held back are the personal objects, money, jewelry, fabrics. When the mourning is lifted, the eldest of the surviving brothers or sisters in the classificatory sense will make the distribution among the near relatives.

/173 cont./

764 Broko dɛ. The eighth day after death, a ceremony called broko dɛ takes place, not to be confused with the lifting of mourning. This ceremony marks the end of the burial rites proper; when it is ended, the dead person can no longer be questioned directly; the period of mourning begins.

[613] It is a very simple ceremony which attracts few people and happens almost entirely within the lineage.

[538] At nightfall they begin to relate Anansi toli, those tra-
[535] ditional tales which make the audience vibrate together and create a special atmosphere. Then come the sɔ̃nge, susa, and awasa dances which last all night.

764 769 The next day each one busies himself at small jobs in the village while the women prepare the meal. This is the ceremony called towɛ nyɪ̃, which takes place at the edge of the mortuary shed about four o'clock in the afternoon. Each woman of the lineage brings a large bowl of rice and a small bowl containing either a piece of meat cooked in sauce or some fish. The oldest man of the lineage has large banana leaves spread out on the ground at the edge of the shed; he takes a little of each dish and puts it down on the leaves, while at the same time addressing the ancestors in ordinary language in the tone of an intimate conversation: "Dead of the family, come, come to eat today."

That lasts perhaps a quarter of an hour, while those present are seated, immobile and meditative. The ancestors are supposed to eat the spiritual part of the food -- kaaka fu nyɪ̃.

Then the elders line up at the edge of the shed five or six small children of about ten years, each one of whom holds a basin upside down. A man keeps them in line /174/ with the aid of a long stick. Then, at a signal, he lifts the stick and the children dash headlong with laughs and shouts toward the ancestors' portion, each one carrying away all he could cover
[613] with his basin. The ceremony terminates with a joyful meal eaten together by the whole lineage, symbol of the communion between the dead and the living.

/180 cont./

765 are divided up equally among all the inhabitants of the village. But if the dead person had near relatives in the village, children, nephews, or brothers, it is they who stand the main burden. [613] Members of the dead person's lineage who are settled in other villages contribute equally to the expenses and the organizing of the festival, but in a symbolic fashion. /181/

[123] A council (kuutu) of the village inhabitants sets the date; during the two weeks preceding each one is busy. The women 765 hull and winnow rice, prepare great quantities of couac and 262 sugar-cane juice. The busimã scour the bush and have meat and fish smoked. Each one, according to his means, buys tafia, sugar, chocolate, and other articles of food liked by the Refugee Blacks.

765 The celebration of the rites occupies a whole week. This 775 is because, the Refugee Blacks think the influence of the dead person can be eliminated only progressively by the repetition of the rite of separation.

The first day, the yɔrka of the dead person whose mourning is going to be lifted is called by formulas beaten on the [535] apinti drum. Then possession dances take place.

765 The second day is reserved for the material preparation for the ceremonies to follow.

[613] The third day, the spouse in mourning, if there is one, is conducted by the members of the dead person's lineage under [822] the mortuary shed. He is dressed in red and is congratulated for having kept the mourning well. Then he is led to the river, [783] and old women of the dead person's lineage begin to bathe him [775] while adjuring the yɔrka to part company with him.

The fourth day at nightfall, all those present assemble [538] at the mortuary shed. They recite tales (Anãsi tɔli), [781] improvisations (mato), and riddles (ɔdo). This phase of the festival has as its object the concentrating of the attention of the hearers; it creates a warm, collective atmosphere which impregnates those present, bringing to them intense and highly colored emotions.

/181 cont./

765 535 533 Next come the dances, always in the order sɔnge, susa, awasa, the rhythms given on the apinti drum. These are not possession dances and do not appear in themselves to have a religious meaning; all involve choruses in which the singers do not accompany themselves on any instrument at all; these songs have no other meaning than to exalt life; the Refugee Blacks find their best artistic expression in them. Many of them demonstrate dazzling imagination; the subjects are extremely varied, and every year new ones are created. But there is a certain number of "classics" which reappear in each festival. Let us mention: "The man who calls his dog lost in the woods"; "The song of the Balen River"; "The woman who watches over her daughter," etc. These songs are very beautiful, and in the great mourning festivals it is difficult to hear them without emotion. Songs and dances follow one another without interruption until the sun's return. This is what is called broko dɛ, "break a day." This ritual, which has a key value in the eyes of the Refugee Blacks, appears to be the affirmation by the group of the triumph of life over death.

765 [769] The fifth day, a kind of buffet is served to the guests under the mortuary shed. In the afternoon there is the offering of food to the ancestors, tɔwɛ ayã; this rite is a communion between the dead and the living.

[769] On the morning of the sixth day, the ceremony ends with the offering of water, celebrated not at the fraga tiki but at the edge of the shed, in honor of the ancestors. They invoke one [775] last time /182/ the yɔrka of the dead man (or the dead woman), while asking it to separate from his spouse for good and to leave her in peace! "U puu a umã a baaka; yu ãŋga umã yu paati tidɛ, na/ mu siki, na: wã sani mu du ɛŋ, a mu dɛ bũ. (We lift the mourning of (this) woman; thou and the woman, you separate from each other today; she must not be sick, nothing must happen to her, she must be well)."

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765 [535] The buchiman execute the kwadyo dance, which seems to be an African war dance; they hold a stick in front of them and make the gesture of taking aim.

That lasts about half an hour.

The guests continue to arrive individually and settle themselves around the mortuary shed, seated on their little benches.

765 202 About three o'clock the drums begin to beat again. It is Bukuman, master of the art of speaking with the drum, who strikes the summons' formulas; the others give him the cue.

The drum speaks for a long time (1). An elder translates

> 1. It is more a question of conventional formulas than a language; two different sounds can be obtained from the drum by striking respectively with the fingers and with the palm.

for me approximately: "Other villages, be still, for there is a great festival in the grand man's village."

"We who are now living, we are going to do what our ancestors taught us long ago."

765 [551] Then the dead for whom mourning will be lifted are directly addressed, being called by name if they are men; for the women like Béniti, who cannot be called directly, for women do not have a drum-name, they call one of their deceased near relatives, here Diolé †, Béniti's brother: "Tell thy sister that we are going to part company with her, for we have been in mourning for her a long time and this is the custom, such as the ancestors did before us."

[769] "Ancestors, come, come near us, we are going to pour the tafia and cane juice for you."

[202] (Libations are made within the shed.) Then the drum addresses those present:

765 /184 cont./

[202] "You who with obia so that the machete will not cut you, so that the broken glass will not wound you, what are you waiting for? You remain seated, are you afraid?"

765 At these words, several of those present stand up and
786 begin to dance, seeking the trance of possession. Some run
787 into the village and come back running, carrying banana-tree stalks. Others drag thorny spathes of awara; two brandish an old, demolished boat.

The drum furiously beats the rhythm of Kumenti. Part of the dancers, taken hold of by a furious delirium, jump and
[824] prance about. Certain ones take thorny spathes of awara (2)

> 2. Thorny palm (astrocaryum vulgare) whose sharp thorns nearly 10 centimeters long are particularly formidable. It is impossible to pick up an awara spathe with bare hands without hurting oneself.

under the arm or pass them around the neck.

Part of those present are taken hold of in their turn by trances, including people of mature age and serious character like Fintiman, who is carried off in a faint.

Two possessed people, a man (Ernest, Kotika) and a woman (Awini, Boniville), smeared with pemba, are subject to extraordinary contortions. Ernest breaks a bottle over his head with such force that the pieces fly several meters. Both /185/ dance on their knees for an appreciable length of time (but the next day Awini will come to have herself cared for). Those present manifest frenzied joy.

765 About five o'clock the sango dance begins. Three apinti
• 535 drums are placed at the west wall of the shed. The orchestra
534 is completed by an old overturned boat which seven to eight men strike with sticks.

/185 cont./

965 The figures are almost similar to those of the awasa dance,
[535] except that the dancers move forward stamping with the left foot.

[533] Songs follow, but entirely covered by the drum and without great musical interest.

Second day, Nov. 9. Day called puu dɛ ("a day is withdrawn"). No rite is performed on that day. Each one is busy with his occupations. The women pound and winnow rice.

Third day, Nov. 10. Day called lolo mata "the pestles are rotted." That day they carry to the edge of the mortuary shed pestles, wood for heating, and everything necessary for the preparation of the next day's food (1).

1. When there is a spouse in mourning, it is on that day that he is brought to the mortuary shed by the dead person's lineage, congratulated, and clothed in new garments red in color."

Fourth day, Nov. 11. Day called poti ala sani na a kɛy yɔu ("to put all things into the mortuary shed").

About two o'clock the young men who have been to cut wood for heating come back in boats decorated with pennons, in the midst of hurrahs and shots.

At three o'clock the basia circulate in the village, calling the women who appear from all sides carrying heavy baskets of cassava.

The provisions prepared for the festival are brought to the
[293] edge of the shed. Many of those present have brought a bottle of tafia. The basia collect all the tafia in large demijohns. In all there will be six demijohns of 15 liters of tafia and as much cane juice.

/185 cont./

765 538 About eight o'clock in the evening, people assemble around the mortuary shed where the drummers and mato (Anansi Toli) storytellers sit. Amèmbé, of Loka village, begins to tell a story which is scarcely listened to, the audience remaining noisy and distracted. The respondents punctuate his discourse with approbations: "hiya ba! na so!" At several [522] passages of the story (when Anansi has succeeded in deceiving his victim), the audience shakes with laughter, the drums beat, the storyteller and his respondents sing and dance. Little by little the audience warms up, participates intensely in the story.

Another tale follows, told by Adiiso, head of the Dju lineage (Asiii). The audience is overexcited, the interludes [535] of dancing become more and more numerous and longer, everybody, men, women, and children take part in it.

About eleven o'clock the dances are going to begin in 765 the order susa, sango, awasa; at six /186/ o'clock in the morn- [535] ing the next day the awasa dances are carried on. Part of those present go down to the wharf to go home, showing no apparent fatigue.

Fifth day, Nov. 12. Nothing happens in the morning. The people take some rest.

At 3:00 P.M. the young men go around dressed up to the nines; people visit each other from one house to the other, they drink and sing.

765 262 264 About 3:30 the basia circulate in the village, calling the women to bring the ceremonial meal. Tables are set out under the shed. The women each bring a big bowl or basin of cooked rice (about two kilograms of rice). Some add a bowl of sauce or cooked fish. No meat.

The basia lay out all that on the tables. There are about 30 bowls or basins (which represents a handsome effort, the rice harvest having been bad), about 50 bottles of soda, several boxes of pastries /biscuits/ and Dutch cheeses.

/186 cont./

765 In the evening the young people dance in front of the houses of several men who have given the tafia, but that no longer has the character of a ceremony. All is over at eleven o'clock in the evening.

On the sixth day, Nov. 13, at seven o'clock, the elders assemble again in front of the /187/ banana leaves where a little of the food offered the day before remains (dogs and chickens have eaten part of it).

A long palaver begins, disconnected and disconcerting, whose purpose escapes me. The clearest thing coming out of it is that the captains make known what the grand man (absent from the ceremony) told them in the morning. They thank the grand man for this festival which has gone off without any incident; they say that they can be counted on if some mourning rises in another village.

[291] [535] [177] Todo makes apologies to the grand man because the young people were dressed in a new style (large loincloths /calimbés/ reaching to the ground) and danced several Creole dances. He says to the audience that this does not conform to custom and that the true Boni dances are s3ygs, susa, awasa.

Next Fintiman pours water gently on the banana leaves, calling the dead whose mourning is being lifted. "We pour water for you, watch over the people in your family, over the grand man and over those who have worked for the mourning, that they may be in good health, that nothing bad happen to them. We have done with you; stay where God put you."

765 775 [768] While pronouncing these words, Fintiman breaks his dead mother's bench and dish (for the dead boys, nothing had been brought). It is a question not only of marking the break with the living but of procuring for the dead woman what will be necessary for her in the Beyond. For this purpose a paddle is also broken, which her son Kiémenti prepared for her, and calabashes prepared by her daughters.

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153 791 789 796 535 [868] --Pupils are taught, individually or collectively, to dance in the manner of the god. Indeed, each divinity has a characteristic form of dance, which it executes sometimes by using the bodies of its bearers when it comes into them. The pupil must imitate as best he can the individual movements and the rhythm of this dance, while the teacher, using the appropriate drum, beats out the calling formulas.

If the god is satisfied with the student, he will be able to come into him.

791 787 785 153 These exercises appear to have as their goal the creation in the pupils of forms of conditioned reflexes; they have nothing in common with the very harsh ordeals which the medicine man of the Guiana Indians imposes upon himself, and do not involve any form of asceticism. It does not seem that chastity, even temporary, is demanded of the student, any more than fasting or doing anything contrary to his inclinations.

787 791 The idea of a spiritual death and resurrection of the possessed person, with all the ritual it entails: long reclusion of the neophytes, change of name of the one possessed, who is supposed to relearn all the activities of ordinary life, does not appear to have been kept by the Refugee Blacks. In a general way, the atmosphere of solemn seriousness, /203/ of secrecy,- and of fear, which characterize the Dahomey cults of possession is not found among them. [152]

791 789 435 [436] These lessons are always paid for and are even very expensive. Payment is made in pieces of cloth, in demijohns of tafia.

Having a Kumenti amounted in 1958 to at least 25,000 francs. This payment is not only compensation for the teacher; it is the mark of legitimacy. What has not been paid for is not, for the Refugee Blacks, legitimately acquired. We shall come back to this important point later. [181]

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787 their legs with this white clay; they prophesy in a singing tone, without the usual voice of their beater's ceasing to be recognizable, expressing themselves in the Saramaka language.

796 The Ampuku have the appearance of men similar to Blacks, but unknown. They reside in the depths of the woods; some are good, others bad. One can gain their good will by [84] worshiping them, which is especially developed in Saramaka country.

796 Baliki, of Kormotibo village, tells of having been present
535 one day at a dance of the Ampuku, when he was traveling to
[103] the Saramaka village of Balen.

"During the day, people went on the paths far into the bush to put down calabashes containing certain herbs. At night were seen to come out of the forest a large number of unknown men, dressed in the manner of the Saramaka. They danced all night, and at dawn left again as they had come."

796 The Ampuku gods, considered to be maleficent gods of the bush, exercise their influence on everyone. When a person [89] has slept in the bush, he "washes" himself free of Ampuku with [824] an infusion of leaves of five plants which are part of the secondary flora surrounding the villages and of which the principal plant is the sangaafu (Costus cylindricus).

791 Frequency of possession. - In 1956 teachers or bas were very
787 scarce in Boni country. For the Kumenti gods, only S...
(Kotika) remained; for the Papa gadu, since the death of
Antinon (Dju), there remained only M... (Papalston) and B...
[619] (Asisi). People were commonly going to receive instruction from Djuka teachers in the villages of the Tapanaoni.

787 It would be a great error to believe that nearly all the
562 men have gods. On the contrary, this is an exception. According to the evaluations we were able to make, there is not more than one adult man out of six or seven who is possessed.

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Fig. 26. Woman possessed by a Papa gadu god.

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Fig. 27. Dance of possession (Papa gadu worship).

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This worship is celebrated each time there is occasion to protect newborn babies. They are washed with a certain decoction of leaves.

845 Every four or five years on the average a big dance takes
535 place, then the father and mother of twins and the twins
751 themselves are washed in order to maintain their powers and keep them in good health.

[753] If these dances are not held, dead twins will show their anger by making living twins and parents of twins sick.

845 Lineages that do not have twins do not practice these
613 rites. If twins are born to them, they will apply at the place
798 of worship of another lineage.

Papalston and Lapé have this cult particularly highly developed.

842 Tone pikin. It is assumed that a woman may be made pregnant
996 by a river god, either a Papa gadu snake god or by the Wata lagi, which look like Indians. Children thus conceived are called tone pikin.

A.... of Papalston, had cut a clearing opposite a remarkable white rock called Weti sts, where she used to moor her boat. She had not had any children for several years and she became pregnant. When her daughter was born a possessed person revealed that she was born of a Papa gadu snake god which lived there: since then her parents /relatives/ go regularly to this rock to make offerings.

About 1910 Alama (Kormotibo) had followed her husband to a shipyard on the lower river; one day while walking in the forest she met an Indian having the appearance of a Galibi Indian, who was carrying a newborn baby. She stopped and admired the baby. The Indian said to her: "Do you wish to raise him?" She acquiesced. He said: "We shall see each other again"; then he went away so quickly that she had the impression that he had disappeared on the spot.

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Cult of Mama gɔ̃. Mama gɔ̃, mother of the earth, is represented by a crude statue of white clay provided with enormous breasts, symbol of fecundity, which can be seen in a little hut situated on the open place of Boniville village. Each year, when the time for cutting the clearings approaches, the grand man, surrounded by many other people, prays to the god to grant fertility to the plantings. If rain does not fall, an offering of water and tafia is made and the statue is sprinkled.

The Boni do not appear to associate the idea of women's fecundity with that of the fertility of the soil, and we have not heard anyone say that the grand man prays on this subject.

Neither do they appear to have a very clear idea about the relationships of this worship with that of the gɔ̃ gadu, local gods of the soil.

Every three years a great possession dance takes place in Boniville on January 1. /260/ in which the Papa gadu gods dance in front of the sanctuary of Mama gɔ̃. We have not been able to obtain specific information on the meaning of this rite.

Cult of the gɔ̃ gadu. It is assumed that every portion of land is under the sway of a local god, gɔ̃ gadu. Its power is limited only by the fertility of the soil, and he who neglects its worship cannot be attacked in his person or in his goods, but only punished by a poor harvest.

What is the nature of these gods, what is their place in the cosmogony? These are questions which not one of our informants had ever asked himself. In their minds, gɔ̃ gadu has a de facto existence, and is rendered de facto worship. This worship consists essentially of:

--Offerings made at the moment of planting;

--The observance of a local day of rest, kina dɛ, corresponding to the god's day of rest.

765 /263 cont./ He will go to the spot, following
782 at a good distance M..., bearer of the remedy, with which he will sprinkle the surface of the clearing, and of offering objects. When the offering has been made, they will wait some time to see whether Masauman is better and if she is, they will deem the god appeased.

796 The Yali Festival

[805] The Refugee Blacks, who do not count the days that elapse, contenting themselves with lunations in order to follow the course of the year, make inquiries from Europeans and Creoles to set the time for the Yali festival which marks the new year. Everyone accumulates provisions, especially tortoise meat, varied drinks, and many firecrackers.

On the evening of December 31 each one dances in his own village.

The festival lasts all night, tafia gushes forth, firecrackers go off everywhere.

[787] At the end of the night several gods "rise" in the heads of their bearers, at least of those who are not completely drunk.

[535] During the day dances resume intermittently in the order awasa, saaɛɛ, susa. It is customary for the people of one lineage to go to dance in the village of another, then they [574] invite them back. People make many individual visits. Some have set up in front of their hut a sort of small buffet on which they have arranged about ten glasses, five to six liters of tafia, four or five bottles of beer, lemonade, and syrup.

Observation in Boniville, January 1, 1958:

The grand man, who scarcely leaves his habitation downstream from Boniville any more, did not /264/ put himself out. He delegated his functions to Lébiman and Pintiman, men about 50 years old, belonging to the fraction of the Kotika and Dju lineages residing in Boniville.